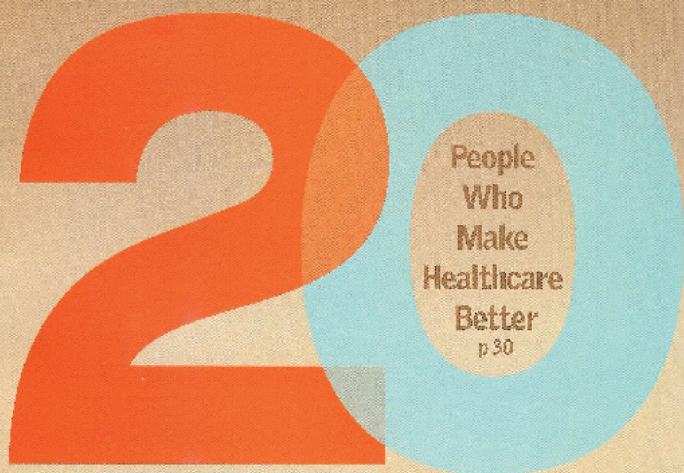


COVER STORY

HealthLeaders



People
Who
Make
Healthcare
Better
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Cindy Ehnes, managed care watchdog

As the head of the nation's only standalone state agency charged with regulating HMOs, Cindy Ehnes makes decisions that affect the lives of more than 20 million Californians. With so much at stake, it's little wonder that her actions, or in some cases inactions, as director of the California Department of Managed Health Care regularly make headlines across the state. While such scrutiny may be disconcerting to some, Ehnes maintains that it's all part of the territory. "We as policy leaders have to be willing to take on the third-rail issues because a failure to do so leaves the public unprotected." Besides, ready access to the press can be another tool in her regulatory arsenal. "We're working to create a real culture of accountability for everyone in the system, starting with health plans knowing that if they are engaging in bad behavior, there is a greater likelihood that they will be found out, that it will be expensive, and that it will be public."